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Local Students Prepare for CyberPatriot National Finals Competition

COLORADO SPRINGS, Co. – A local team of Civil Air Patrol cadets from the Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron at Peterson AFB, CO, is headed to the Washington, D.C. area March 22 – 24 as a finalist in the national championship round of CyberPatriot IV – The National High School Cyber Defense Competition.

CyberPatriot is a unique competition geared toward teenagers that replicates real life cyber security situations faced by computer administrators. Created in 2008 by the Air Force Association, CyberPatriot provides students hands-on learning about cyber security while exciting, educating, and motivating them to be the nation's next cyber defenders.

Led by CAP Capt. Bill Blatchley, this team is one of 12 finalists for the competition's All Service Division. This year's two-track competition had public, private and home schools registered in the Open Division, while Junior ROTC units and CAP squadrons filled the All Service Division. In all, more than 1,000 teams registered to participate, representing all 50 states, U.S. Department of Defense Dependent Schools in Europe and the Pacific, and Canada.

"Each year this competition draws in very determined students who demonstrate great energy, motivation and excitement in their involvement with CyberPatriot," said Bernie Skoch, CyberPatriot Commissioner. "We have to congratulate all the students for their hard work, and we look forward to the great amount of enthusiasm they will bring with them to the National Finals Competition in March."

The All Service Division began with more than 600 teams registered. After two spirited rounds of competition, 40 teams advanced to Round 3. Now, the group has been narrowed to 12, and each team will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the CyberPatriot National Finals Competition at the Gaylord National Hotel and Convention Center, in National Harbor, Maryland, where teams will compete face-to-face and defend virtual networks from a professional aggressor team.

Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron team members include Cadet Master Sgt. Christopher Vasquez, Team Captain, Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Kyal Lanum, Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Carlin Idle, Cadet Airman 1st Class Christopher Ottesen, Cadet Airman Basic Stephen Parish and Senior Member John Parish. Assistant coaches include Cadet 1st Lt. Simeon Blatchley and Cadet 1st Lt. Thomas Jessop.

Round 3 of the Open Division competition will be held January 27-28. It will select the 12 teams from that division who will advance to the National Finals Competition as well. Three additional teams from Colorado are competing in round 3 of the open division. Teams from Vista Ridge and Discovery Canyon High Schools from Colorado Springs and Pickens Tech from Aurora will be joined by 33 other teams from across the nation seeking one of the 12 Open Division finalist slots.

The top team from each division will be announced at an awards banquet concluding this year's competition.

About CyberPatriot

CyberPatriot is presented by the Northrop Grumman Foundation, with founding partners SAIC and the CIAS at the University of Texas - San Antonio. CyberPatriot is also a member of the U.S. Cyber Challenge (USCC), a national coalition of public-private sector entities collaborating to enhance the workforce with the next generation of cyber security professionals. To see a list of all the advancing All Service finalists and for more information about CyberPatriot, go to www.uscyberpatriot.org.

About Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron

The Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron is comprised of members from all over the Pikes Peak region with 130 members. The squadron has an active color guard and is actively involved in the local community and all three of CAP's missions of emergency services, aerospace education and cadet programs. The squadron meets on Peterson AFB every Tuesday from 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM. For more information about the Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron, please visit www.cscs-wolfpack.org.

About Civil Air Patrol

CAP, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with more than 56,000 members nationwide. CAP performs 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and was credited by the AFRCC with saving 100 plus lives in fiscal year 2011. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counter-drug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the nearly 22,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for more than 66 years. For information, go to www.cap.gov.

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